

WINTER 2024 |



DEAN'S NEWSLETTER

WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES



Message from the Interim Dean

BY DR. KRISTIN LATHAM-SCOTT

As we near the end of Winter term, I have deepened my experience as Interim Dean for the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS), and I am enjoying the process and learning of this position. I find that WOU, and thus CLAS, is in a time of reflection, assessment, planning, and aligning strategically, to be connected parts of the entirety of our university.

I find joy in getting to know more people on campus, strengthening connections with our faculty and staff, and I am always delighted when I get to work with our students. We have challenges, as does all higher education right now, with continuing to offer our programs and support our students amidst public perceptions and questions about the value of a college degree. However, I feel encouraged by the work done on our campus and in CLAS to promote WOU, support our students, and provide opportunities for faculty and staff innovation. I believe that our students benefit deeply from their education at WOU – in their development of skills, building self-confidence, and processes of thinking that prepare them to enter the workforce, continuing education, and careers. I continue to focus on community building – for faculty, staff, and students – around our shared intellectual curiosity and value of service-mindedness.

I am working with Mark Girod, Dean of the College of Education, to create occasions for faculty to share their knowledge and expertise in college pedagogy, learn from each other, and celebrate our fantastic teaching (seriously, WOU has really fantastic educators!) via a platform we have termed Open Classrooms. The collective years of experience embedded within our faculty forms a team that enriches the fabric of our academic community. Each faculty member brings unique insights, based on practical engagement in their respective fields and classrooms. The diversity of expertise creates a vibrant environment where interdisciplinary discussions thrive, fostering a dynamic exchange of ideas.

This power of collective wisdom builds guidance for each other and allows our faculty to showcase themselves as some of our best assets, shaping learning spaces that are both enriching and inspiring.

I am also working with Chelle Batchelor, Dean of Library and Academic Innovation, to provide a quarterly series on Generative AI – a hot topic of discussion in many conversations in which I have participated. We consider the role of generative AI in college classrooms, in the workflow of our campus employees, in the career preparation of our students, and more. We acknowledge the transformative power of emerging technologies as our academic community is grappling with the complexities of generative AI, such as ChatGPT. Faculty, staff, and students alike are delving into learning about artificial intelligence, exploring its implications across disciplines. Our goal is to create spaces for intellectual inquiry that begins to address the profound impact of AI on our society, and in our classrooms and learning. As we embrace the season of reflection, CLAS is not only committed to providing exceptional teaching but also to preparing our students to navigate and contribute meaningfully to the evolving landscape of generative technologies like ChatGPT and a workforce that will draw on these skills in the future.

As we step into the final weeks of winter term 2024, CLAS remains dedicated to fostering excellence in teaching, sustainably innovating our curriculum, and providing our students with transformative experiences.

Best wishes, Kristin

WELCOME NEW COLLEAGUES TO CLAS

**WOU'S OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DOCTORATE (OTD) PROGRAM
IS EXCITED TO WELCOME TWO NEW FACULTY MEMBERS,
DR. RONNIE TAYLOR AND DR. KRISTIN NXUMALO!**



**Dr. Kristin Nxumalo, Assistant Professor of
Occupational Therapy**

Kristin earned her Occupational Therapy Doctorate Degree from the University of Southern California and most recently worked as the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator/Assistant Professor at Pacific University's School of Occupational Therapy. Kristin also brings great experience from working in Occupational Therapy Admissions and has taken on the role of Admissions Lead for the WOU OTD Program. In addition to her work in OTD admissions, Kristin will be teaching a variety of OT classes focusing on OT theories, therapeutic groups, and contextual issues in OT practice. Kristin is a third generation Oregonian who lived in South Africa for a year and is very passionate about being a WOUvian.

Ronnie and Kristin have temporary offices on the 3rd floor of Todd Hall and will be moving to WOU:Salem once renovations are completed for the OTD program. We are thrilled to have Dr. Taylor and Dr. Nxumalo join the WOU family and look forward to their respective contributions to the OTD program and the greater WOU community! Please join me in giving them both a hearty WOU welcome!



**Dr. Ronald Taylor, Assistant Professor of
Occupational Therapy**

Ronnie earned his Occupational Therapy Doctorate Degree from Pacific University and has most recently been working at Armworks Hand Therapy in Portland. Prior to becoming an occupational therapist, Ronnie worked as a clinical medical claims reviewer and a paramedic in Washington, DC and Massachusetts, providing him with great insights into the US healthcare system from a variety of perspectives. Ronnie will be teaching classes related to Human Anatomy and Movement, as well as classes focused on adult rehabilitation and hand therapy. Outside of healthcare, Ronnie is also a successful Hip Hop artist, with his third album being released soon.

Publications



New publication in the Journal of Comparative Psychology coauthored with two WOU undergraduate alumni, Kayleigh Pierson and Alex Reece!

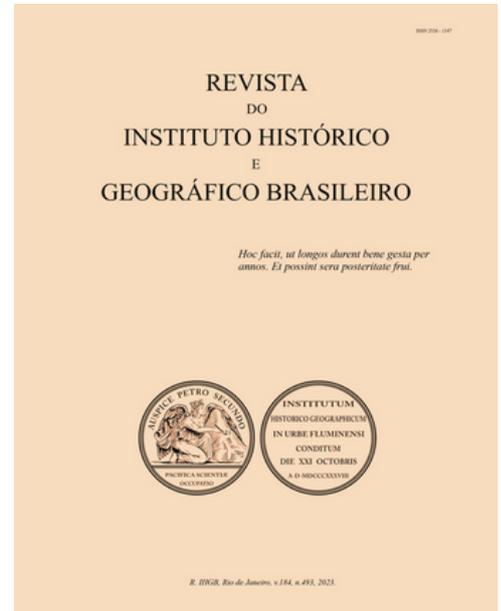
Schwartz JW, Pierson KH, Reece AK. 2023. Pitch affects human (*Homo sapiens*) perception of emotional arousal from diverse animal calls. *Journal of Comparative Psychology*. Advance Online Publication. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2024-19488-001?doi=1>

Featured on the website Kudos:

<https://www.growkudos.com/publications/10.1037%25252Fcom0000366>

The Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro published the first article from Dr. Ricardo Pelegrin Taboada in Portuguese! This is the link to the article:

<https://rihgb.emnuvens.com.br/revista/article/view/78>



Drs. Miyuki Arimoto and Mari Sakiyama presented a paper Arimoto, Miyuki and Mari Sakiyama. 2023.

"Justice and Equity to Criminal Justice OER" at American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia, PA.

They conducted a content analysis based on the dataset provided by the Open Oregon Educational Resources through a grant funded by the U.S.

Department of Education,

to understand the existing gaps and limitations of the development of criminal justice OER, and surveyed research of students in Oregon to further explore students' awareness, experience, and expectations in OER.

https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/oer_symposium/2023/presentations/14/



Program Notes

Recent tidbits from some of our programs

Computer Science

- In mid-February, the Computer Science Division hosted 14 students, their teacher, and the College and Career Counselor from Albany Options School on the WOU. Students were able to sit in on WOU CS courses, eat lunch on campus, hear about opportunities, and take a tour given by Ambassador Maximus Sing. All in all, everyone had a great day. Students genuinely got to be comfortable on a college campus - WOU is truly amazing like that!

Criminal Justice

- WOU CJ alumni Caprice Massey was appointed Washington County Sheriff in December 2023. She makes history as 1st female WA County Sheriff. She also holds a position on the CJSD Advisory Board.

<https://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/bcc/news/2023/10/03/undersheriff-caprice-massey-will-serve-washington-county-sheriff-beginning-december-1>

Business & Economics

- The WOU Division of Business and Economics has developed a Free Tax Preparation Service in partnership with DHS and OSU and is pleased to roll out the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program with a location on the WOU campus. From February 22nd to April 13th, you can come to WOU as a certified IRS site for tax preparation assistance. This program is overseen by VITA site coordinator Susan Graham, a retired tax attorney with 15 years at Ernst & Young, who holds a JD and LLM in Taxation. This program is also supported with four dynamic students, who are trained and IRS-certified. Go over to our page to secure your spot:

<https://wou.edu/business-economics/volunteer-income-tax-assistance-vita/> with services offered in both English and Spanish.

Humanities

- On Thursday, Jan 25, WOU was a host site for the North American Computational Linguistics Open (NACLO) competition, which is open to all high school students in the US and Canada. Like other high school 'Olympiad' contests for academic subjects, the event gives students an opportunity to explore an academic topic in a fun way while challenging their logical thinking and reasoning skills. Dr. Rob Troyer, professor and coordinator of the Linguistics program, worked with Central High School (CHS) staff and students to form a group of interested participants. NACLO was first launched in 1998, but this was the first time WOU was a host site. With more publicity and an interest in forming a dedicated club at CHS, we hope to see many more participants for the 2025 competition.

- The Write Place, under the directorship of WOU Professor Henry Hughes, is continuing to thrive and underwent an entire website remodel, thanks in part to the work of Dr. Lars Soderlund's Professional Editing class. Dr. Hughes also edits the Write Place literary magazine, Traverse, in close work with student editorial assistants. <https://writeplace.org/features/>

Natural Science & Math

- WOU Biology tabled at Monmouth Elementary School's "STEAM" night last night, with assistance from faculty, lab preparators, and current WOU Biology students, Lilia Chapman and Heather Tovar, who volunteered to help run the table and were incredible ambassadors for WOU.



WOU STUDENTS



FEM in STEM

FEM in STEM, a campus group focused on connection, mentoring, and support of all underrepresented genders in STEM fields on campus hosted a Winter term Speaker Series event featuring Dr. Gabrielle Roesch-McNally, director for the Women for the Land program at American Farmland Trust. After the session, a fantastic group of WOU students was able to join us and Dr. Roesch-McNally for pizza dinner!



Criminal Justice Club

The Criminal Justice Club hosted FBI Agent Kevin Jones for their November meeting who taught folks how to lift a fingerprint the old-school way with black powder! For more information contact club president Kira Shelton, kshelton21@mail.wou.edu



Model United Nations Club

The students of the WOU Model United Nations club hosted their International Awareness Dinner on Tuesday, February 6th in the WUC. The dinner featured Dr. Ricardo Taboada speaking about "A Journey without return: Cuban Immigration to the United States." Students, their families, WOU alumni and members of the WOU and surrounding community joined together to celebrate the activities of the club, fund raiser for upcoming conferences and expand our knowledge of the world.



Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society

Five Biology students attended and presented original research at the Hood River 2024 Annual Conference of the Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society – Calder Smith, Lilly White, Trevor Thomson, Angela Bartlett, and Antonette Jurewicz. This conference is the largest regional scientific conference for wildlife professionals and is attended by hundreds of scientists and policy makers from the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Forest Service, as well as many students from various universities. Professor Gareth Hopkins led the group and presented research conducted by Andrew Bendt, and WOU Alum Justin Ingram (BS Biology 2023) also joined.



UP-COMING EVENTS

THE OREGON GAME PROJECT CHALLENGE



In conjunction with the division of Computer Science, The Oregon Game Project Challenge (OGPC) returns to the New PE Building at WOU for its annual Main Event, Saturday, May 16, 2024. OGPC (www.ogpc.info) is a video game development competition for middle school and high school students that draws teams from all over Oregon develop a video game. The spring Main Event attracts to our campus many parents, teacher-coaches, and tech professional volunteers, who learn about the amazing opportunities and environment at WOU. Students contribute in a variety of ways, including game design, project management, artistry, and programming.

THE GERONTOLOGY PROGRAM



"The Gerontology program is celebrating Careers in Aging Week March 4-8! We would like to thank the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) and the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) for sponsoring this year's events highlighting the diverse careers available in the field of gerontology and aging.

[Please see flyer attached.](#)"